

Una perspectiva documental sobre la batalla de Santa Cruz de 1657

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Introducción

Este ensayo en heurística y crítica histórica está en deuda con una sucesión de entidades, amigos y colegas a los que debo una mención de gratitud.

La idea inicial —la de reunir y publicar las fuentes inglesas estrictamente contemporáneas a la batalla de Santa Cruz— se convirtió en propósito realizable gracias a la bolsa de estudios que me concedió el British Council durante el verano de 1966. El Institute of Historical Research, adjunto a la Universidad de Londres, me permitió esa primaria toma de posición, sin la cual la investigación está llamada a no despegar.

Meses después, tanto Ohio State University Library como The Library of Congress me han facilitado la labor de colación de textos, merced al eficiente servicio fotográfico que distingue la biblioteconomía en los Estados Unidos.

Mi agradecimiento va dirigido igualmente a Concepción Castañeda y C. Gundlach, quienes han puesto lo mejor de sus voluntades en la elaboración material de los textos.

Por último quiero referirme a REVISTA DE HISTORIA CANARIA en La Laguna. Precisamente inscrito en la línea de sobriedad

documental que tipifica la publicación dirigida por el Dr. Serra Ràfols, este trabajo aspira, sin embargo, a lastimar el castillo roquero de los prejuicios historiográficos, es decir, al nacionalismo que se sirve del «noble patrioterismo» para incapacitar la comprensión crítica del pasado.

Es cierto que en «historia las causas no se postulan, sino que se investigan».¹ También lo es el que, «a fuerza de juzgar, se concluye fatalmente por perder la capacidad para exponer».² Consignas tan saludables como éstas son sólo remotas orientaciones a veces desatendidas.

El planteamiento de la necesidad metodológica en la investigación histórica se recordará cómo fue magistralmente delineado por J. G. Droysen,³ heredero de la acumulación cientifista alemana y promotor, *sensu lato*, de aportaciones más técnicas.⁴ A pesar de la racionalísima distribución que aconsejó como esquema apriorístico con el que llevar a la práctica la esencia del método histórico (*forschend zu verstehen*, investigar para comprender),⁵ Droysen no se redujo a una exaltación de la higiene mental, por así decirlo (misión según él de la lógica), ni tampoco pensó que la mejor historiografía debía contentarse con la desnuda oferta del «esto pasó» (estadio de la evidencia, reino de la «física histórica»), sino que propuso además la delicada implicación del valorar (siempre administrada por la ética). De este modo el encadenamiento de las operaciones no podía revelarse más atrayente para el historiador

¹ Cfr. el estimulante cuaderno de MARC BLOCH, *Apologie pour l'Histoire ou Métier d'Historien*, París, 1949.

² *Ibid.*, p. 70. Estableciendo una ley general, muy aplicable al subjetivismo apriorístico en Historia, dice: «la leçon du developement intellectuel de l'humanité est pourtant claire: les sciences se sont toujours montrées d'autant plus fécondes et, par suite, d'autant plus serviables, finalement, à la pratique — qu'elles abandonnaient plus délibérément le vieil anthropocentrisme du bien et du mal.»

³ Cfr. *Historik* (Vorlesungen über Enzyklopädie und Methodologie der Geschichte), München, 1958; XXI + 444 pp. El proceso de la metodología histórica quedaba atendido a los siguientes estadios: *Heuristik-Kritik-Interpretation-Systematik-Darstellung*.

⁴ Cfr. el valioso manual de E. BERNHEIM, *Lehrbuch der Historischen Methode und der Geschichtsphilosophie*, New York, B. Franklin; 2 vols.

⁵ Cfr. *Op. cit.*, *Die Historische Methode*, § 8.

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que, en busca de la verdad, se comprometía a una reducción inductiva de su propio campo de estudio. Reconocimiento, explicación y comprensión (*erkennen, erklären, verstehen*)⁶ compondrían en adelante el trípede de las Ciencias Históricas.

Ocurrió, pues, gracias a Droysen, que se formulara con nitidez el procedimiento metodológico llamado a desplazar, aunque a brazo partido, toda la postura emocional sobre la que siempre se encaramó el fraude del nacionalismo, atrincherado en la divulgación *sui generis* del pasado humano.

En este ensayo, REVISTA DE HISTORIA CANARIA admitirá que el intento de llevar a cabo la reducción inductiva antes aludida no podía contentarse con una contribución documental, eje de esta experiencia, sino que al mismo tiempo exigía la valoración crítica, el cotejo de algunas obras clásicas o acreditadas que guardan relación con el episodio central y la estimativa final con que me propuse rendir cuentas.

Al cabo del proceso se verá cómo un concreto acontecimiento ha sido víctima de más o menos sutiles interpretaciones por parte del nacionalismo histórico, justo el de Inglaterra y España.

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Historiografía comparada

El 20 de abril (30 en el cómputo español) de 1657, la flota inglesa que había bloqueado el Atlántico y el Mediterráneo ibéricos desde hacía más de siete meses sorprendió en aguas de Santa Cruz de Tenerife a las naves de Indias y otros convoyes españoles y flamencos que también estaban anclados en la bahía. Al cabo de doce horas (Blake ordenó empezar las maniobras de madrugada, entre 6 y 7 a. m., mientras nos consta que la última fragata inglesa

⁶ Ibid., *Die Historische Methode*, § 14.

logró remontar la bahía al ponerse el sol: aproximadamente a las 6 o 7 de la tarde en tal latitud y en tal época del año),⁷ la victoria de la escuadra inglesa no admitía discusión.

Veamos cómo la transmisión histórica en Inglaterra y en España ha descrito e interpretado el hecho. Elegiremos sólo algunos casos sobresalientes en la tradición historiográfica de los dos países.

INGLATERRA.—a) *Lord Clarendon*: personalidad destacada durante más de treinta años en la vida pública de Inglaterra. Clarendon se opuso al sistema de Cromwell. En prisión y en el exilio maduró su fidelidad al parlamentarismo monárquico y su vertiente de historiador tuvo oportunidad para ofrecer una visión de los turbulentos años vividos por Inglaterra durante dos décadas (1640-1660).⁸

A pesar de su enemiga al Lord Protector, Clarendon supo reconocer valores. De ahí que el Almirante Blake, como otros tantos líderes de su pueblo, haya conocido positísimamente estimación por parte de Clarendon.

Desde un principio nos dice que «the victory, with all its circumstances, was very wonderful, and will never be forgotten in Spain and the Canaries».⁹

El relato de la operación y de la batalla, el énfasis en el potencial de fuego de las naves y de los fuertes isleños y el constante tono enfático, «the whole action was so miraculous»,¹⁰ contribuyeron a la aceptación del pasaje de Clarendon como si se tratase de un clásico, cuando, tanto en esta ocasión como en otras muchas, su interpretación es injusta, desaforada o subjetiva.

⁷ Como se podrá comprobar, casi todas las fuentes originales, o posteriores redacciones históricas, coinciden en este punto. Por ejemplo, Stayner y Viera y Clavijo.

⁸ Cfr. *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, Oxford, Cl. P., 1888, 6 vols. El texto que nos interesa, en vol. VI, pp. 36-37.

⁹ Cfr. *Op. cit.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.* La participación de Clarendon en dos gobiernos (Chancellor of the Exchequer bajo Carlos I y Lord Chancellor durante la Restauración) explica en parte el matiz de sus personalizaciones.

b) Figuras de la talla de *Bolingbroke, Macaulay y Gardiner*, acatando la versión habitual, o heroizando el puritanismo de Cromwell y de su época, como fue el caso de Gardiner, han hecho posible la perpetuación de una creencia: la revolución puritana inglesa, desde el pronunciamiento del Long Parliament hasta los días de la Commonwealth, fue testimonio de que el reino de Dios se estaba haciendo realidad en la tierra.¹¹ La batalla de Santa Cruz confirmaba el auxilio providencial que el Todopoderoso venía prestando a la nación inglesa desde que la armada fue puesta fuera de juego en 1588.

c) *C. H. Firth* publicó en 1905 un sustancioso y desapasionado trabajo que apareció en la «*English Historical Review*».¹² La conclusión de que «destruir la flota de guerra española fue para Blake objeto de más importancia que interceptar la flota del tesoro (*plate fleet*) rumbo a Canarias» nos parece sin embargo conjeturar contra la evidencia, ya que no nos consta que Blake fuese del mismo parecer. En cambio, Abbot nos brinda documentos en que se subraya la perentoria situación económica del Protectorado, y añade que «Cromwell's government were depending largely on the hope of supplies from that quarter [Canarias], as much, or even more than on the prestige of victory, if victory should come...»¹³

De cualquier modo, Firth constituye el intento más completo de historiar el suceso: su dependencia de fuentes inglesas condiciona todo el transcurso de su aportación.

ESPAÑA.—a) *Viera y Clavijo*, historiador príncipe de Canarias, después de dar cuenta detallada de la oficialidad que se distinguió

¹¹ La expresión original es de Milton (*God's Kingdom on Earth*). Una breve pero selecta revisión de opiniones en *Oliver Cromwell and the Puritan Revolt: failure of a man or a faith?*, Ed. por R. E. BOYER, 1966 (Problems in European Civilization).

¹² Cfr. *Blake and the Battle of Santa Cruz*, «*Eng. Hist. Rev.*», vol. XX, pp. 228-250, 1905.

¹³ Cfr. *The writings and speeches of Oliver Cromwell . . .*; Cambridge, 1939, vol. IV, pp. 506-7. Para el entendimiento de la compleja situación en la Inglaterra de aquellos años, Cfr. *The Last Years of the Protectorate* por C. H. FIRTH, en cuyo vol. I, cap. VIII, reproduce literalmente el artículo antes mencionado.

en la acción, nos transmite lo siguiente sobre la batalla de Santa Cruz: «combate de diez horas con los ingleses, cuya escuadra, habiéndose mantenido surta en el puerto hasta las seis de la noche, zarpó precipitadamente las anclas a favor de la obscuridad, sacando desarbolado a remolque el navío llamado “El Gobierno”, con otros buques bastante maltratados. Los enemigos perdieron más de 500 hombres; de los habitantes de Tenerife sólo murieron 5».¹⁴

No hace falta sacar a la luz la astuta técnica descriptiva de Viera con tal de producir en el lector la impresión de que lo que sucedió en la bahía de Tenerife fue una simple escaramuza que costó sensibles pérdidas humanas a los intrépidos ingleses. Así es por lo que apostilla poco después que con «mucha más razón que en Londres debió ser aplaudida en la corte de Madrid la noticia del valor y magnanimidad con que los canarios, además de haber defendido el tesoro de la flota [había sido desembarcado una semana antes y trasladado al interior de Tenerife],¹⁵ impedido la presa y maltratado al inglés, habían anticipado a la América los avisos convenientes para su resguardo».¹⁶ La observación de Viera ha

¹⁴ Cfr. *Historia de Canarias*, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, 1951, vol. II, p. 580.

¹⁵ Si tanto don Diego de Egues como el Capitán General Alonso Dávila y el Corregidor de Tenerife don Ambrosio Barrientos convinieron en la precaución de desembarcar la remesa de metales, no cabe pensar que el ataque de Blake sorprendió al gobierno de La Laguna y a la población de Santa Cruz. Se sabía de antemano el riesgo posible, y se sabía que el bloqueo del Atlántico ibérico podría implicar un ulterior asedio a las Islas. Sobre el paradero del tesoro no se sabe gran cosa. Se sospecha que fue trasladado a San Cristóbal de La Laguna (una ciudad a cinco o seis millas de la costa, dicen las fuentes inglesas; mientras que otra se refiere al lugar con un topónimo —Arragona— que parece ser por error de copista la propia La Laguna).

¹⁶ Que la intención de Viera era persistente y deliberada —la de evidenciar la valiente fidelidad del Archipiélago— se pone de relieve otra vez cuando alude al fracaso de la invasión del Almirante Gening en 1707: «De este modo supieron las Canarias, en medio de sus mayores calamidades, resistir, batir y rechazar sus plazas, sin ningún auxilio forastero y con lauro inmortal de su amor a Felipe V, la fuerza enemiga que intentaba seducir su constancia [inglesa], ya con el temor de la guerra ya con el ejemplo contagioso de otras provincias [Cataluña], ya, en fin con el interés de su comercio» (tan necesitado por el Archipiélago para mantener la debida movilidad entre producción agrícola exportable, y manufacturas, bienes de consumo, importables).

de entenderse en el contexto de su apolítico nacionalismo insular y como habilidosa maniobra para recordar al Madrid de sus días la fidelidad del alejado Archipiélago.

b) *La historiografía española del siglo XIX* hasta Fernández Duro u olvidó o tergiversó el suceso. La veta antibritánica que tanto ha contribuido al malentendimiento entre los dos pueblos ha sido alimentada paladinamente por muchos historiadores, y hasta muy recientemente.

Fernández Duro, en su retrato del general de la escuadra de Nueva España, Diego de Egues, y en la precisa narración de la batalla de Santa Cruz, logró reconstruir el hecho con honestidad, aunque lamentando los reiterados contratiempos sufridos por la flota española bajo los reyes de la Casa de Austria.¹⁷

c) En sus «*Piraterías*», *Ruméu de Armas* no subsana la cuestión que nos concierne. Su comentario conclusivo de que en aquella ocasión «se había impedido por los tinerfeños con singular heroísmo el desembarco del enemigo, haciéndole gran daño y mortandad y salvando de las garras inglesas diez millones de pesos que se guardaban en el interior de la isla»,¹⁸ no nos parece ponderado, ya que sin poner en duda la tenacidad de la artillería de costa es difícil aseverar que Blake había decidido un desembarco en Tenerife.¹⁹

En cambio Ruméu de Armas reacciona contra el filisteísmo de la historiografía inglesa, perpetuamente insistiendo en la exclusiva misión guerrera de la Royal Navy, cuando en este caso, como había ocurrido en el siglo XVI y ocurriría durante el XVIII, la idea eje de la política naval inglesa fue la de aniquilar la competencia

¹⁷ Cfr. *Armada Española*, t. III (ed. 1897). Fernández Duro se refiere en el pasaje sobre la batalla de Santa Cruz a los reproches formulados por don Diego de Egues al gobernador de Tenerife, a causa de la pobre colaboración de la artillería. Si las armas de fuego instaladas a lo largo de la costa ascendían aproximadamente a 70, como Lurting da a entender, es evidente que el contraataque desde tierra pudo haber sido un poco más eficiente.

¹⁸ Cfr. *Piraterías y ataques navales a las Islas Canarias*, t. III, 1ª parte, p. 189.

¹⁹ Como se discute a continuación, hubo rumores sobre la captura de una de las Canarias por la flota inglesa. Después del éxito en Jamaica, se creyó poder hacer otro tanto en el Archipiélago africano.

hispano-franco-holandesa con vistas a enriquecer a la combativa alta clase media y subsanar la creciente deuda nacional.

En vista que los ecos no son siempre fieles y alteran el original, debido quizá a los prejuicios de época y de cultura, hagamos una última tentativa, en esta ocasión con dos fuentes nacionalmente no comprometidas en el asunto que se discute.

OTRAS FUENTES.—a) *Francesco Giavarina*, residente veneciano en Londres, redactó un cumplido informe al Dux y Senado de su ciudad de origen, que debe manejarse con escrúpulo, dado que muchos datos le fueron proporcionados por conocidos ingleses o desorbitados rumores que debieron circular por todo Londres en aquella primavera de 1657. El *leit motiv* de Giavarina era que se especulaba un desembarco en Tenerife, no sólo para rescatar el tesoro, sino para completar el bloqueo de los puertos atlánticos españoles (La Coruña, Cádiz, y ahora Tenerife) y así incomunicar a España de sus colonias americanas.²⁰ De otra parte, Cromwell, que puso los cimientos del intervencionismo inglés en el Mediterráneo, no desestimó la idea de apoderarse de una de las Canarias, cabeza de puente entre dos circuitos marítimos y provechosa red de mercados.²¹

El crédito que se le debe conceder a este informe es sólo inspirador; las inexactitudes en las concreciones lo invalidan para una ajustada reconstrucción histórica (incluso afirma que una tropa inglesa desembarcó en Tenerife para demoler las fortificaciones).

²⁰ Cfr. *Calendar State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating English Affairs, Venice, 1657-59*, vol. XXXI, 1931, pp. 63-5: «Beyond a doubt this a most serious blow of the greatest significance for the Spaniards, as they will need several years to equip another fleet and in the meantime no money will arrive. If the English succeed in carrying out the rest of their plans the Catholic must be considered very feeble and practically extenuated, as with the English in possession of an island in the Canaries and keeping squadrons off Cadiz and Corunna, the Spanish fleets from the West Indies would be shut out on every side.»

²¹ Cfr. mapa, indicando el bloqueo del Atlántico desde Galicia a Canarias, con la anuencia de Portugal, que había permitido a los ingleses refugiarse y avituallarse en Lisboa, cuando no en Lagos.

b) *Leopoldo von Ranke*, con sobriedad muy de su gusto, sitúa y valora la batalla de Santa Cruz en el capítulo séptimo de su *Englische Geschichte*.²² Aunque no abunda en datos, apunta inteligentemente que la victoria no salvó al Protectorado de los difíciles trances que atravesó durante 1657-1658 (recuérdese que en mayo de 1657, caballeros, ciudadanos y burgueses enviaban a Oliverio Cromwell «the humble petition and advice», exponente del malestar parlamentario a causa del personalismo creciente del Protectorado que se había instituido cuatro años antes).²³

También supo ver Ranke la proyección internacional de la batalla, que según él aceleró la decisión de Portugal en ratificar la alianza con Inglaterra (*den bereits zustande gebrachten Handelsvertrag zu ratifizieren*),²⁴ así como abocar a Felipe IV a consentir en los términos en que la Paz de los Pirineos se iba a redactar.

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Las fuentes inglesas contemporáneas a la batalla de Santa Cruz

Dispersas en las memorias, diarios y correspondencia de J. Thurloe, Waller y Burton hay menciones comentadas a la batalla de Santa Cruz.²⁵

Vamos a limitar por el momento la publicación a cinco fuentes, cuatro de ellas escritas por partes activas, siendo la quinta y última el informe oficial expedido por el Parlamento.

²² Cfr. *Englische Geschichte*, III, Wien, s. a., pp. 164-5. Muy análogo al juicio de Ranke es el de la *Cambridge Modern History*, ed. de 1907, vol. IV, p. 484. No nos extraña si se recuerda que la influencia de Ranke pesó mucho en el propulsor de tal obra colectiva, el inoquible Lord Acton.

²³ Cfr. *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660*, por S. R. GARDINER, Oxford, 1951.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 164.

²⁵ Particularmente informativa es la correspondencia de J. Thurloe, Fouché de la Inglaterra cromwelliana, en la Bodleian Library (Oxford) y en el Museo Británico (Add. Mss. 4156-7-8), en adelante citado B. M.

1) SIR RICHARD STAYNER'S NARRATIVE.—Stayner fue el almirante de retaguardia de la flota inglesa destacada por Cromwell desde el verano de 1656 para llevar a feliz término el bloqueo del Atlántico español en Europa. Era la primera vez que, con excepción de la sistemática piratería cultivada desde tiempos de Isabel I, Inglaterra pasaba a la ofensiva en el duelo oceánico.

Paradójicamente, Stayner, que había capturado la flota de Indias cerca de la bahía de Cádiz en septiembre del 56, iba a jugar el más intrépido papel en la acción de Santa Cruz, en calidad de pionero destacado al mando del «Speaker».

El texto de Stayner ha sido reproducido —más que consultado— por todos los historiadores ingleses como fuente esencial para la reconstrucción del episodio.²⁶

Es ciertamente una valiosa referencia. Escrito en una sintaxis no muy literaria pero sí transparente y técnica, comienza pormenorizando el bloqueo de Cádiz y las eventuales arribadas en la costa portuguesa (Lagos, Tavira), hasta que Blake obtiene la confirmación de que la nueva flota de Indias ha hecho escala en Canarias.

Explica la incertidumbre de Blake en cuanto a la maniobra de ataque se refiere, y cómo dicha incertidumbre le llevó a costear el sur de Tenerife aproximándose a Gran Canaria. Nos muestra las consultas del alto mando, la decisión final de dividir la flota, las fragatas que la integraban, etc.

A partir de este momento la descripción de las fortificaciones tinerfeñas, desde el castillo de San Felipe hasta el de San Andrés; la de las naves españolas distribuidas a lo largo de la costa y a diferente nivel, y la del fuego cruzado entre las dos flotas y la artillería de costa, arrastran al lector hasta los últimos intentos por saquear a hacer presas algunas naves enemigas, cuando la otra división entró en la bahía.

Por fuerza la fragata de Stayner tenía que ser la más dañada (su deposición habla de un desmantelamiento). Fue, también, la que se vio más favorecida por el cambio del régimen de brisas

²⁶ La referencia del Stayner's Narrative en B. M. (Add. M. S., 32,093, f. 372).

(de la costa al océano habitualmente al anochecer), factor que inspiró la leyenda del providencialismo.

El balance (13 muertos y cerca de 50 heridos) resulta muy favorable pero posible.

THE BATTLE OF SANTA CRUZ

(Sir Richard Stayner's Narrative)

True relation of the destroying the Spanish ships at the Isle of Teneriffe, the 20th April, 1657, from the first intelligence we had of them as we lay before Cales.

The 17th February 1656 General Blake lying in the bay of Cales with 24 sail of men of war, it being fair weather, the wind at WNW, there came a ship of London from the Barbados, the commander's name Young, who sought for our fleet as he was going from Barbados to Genoa, who told the General that as he came from the Barbados, he fell into a fleet of Spaniards coming from the West-Indies, of about 24 sails. He kept company with them several days, and about 170 leagues WbN from the Madeiras, he finding by their course they steered for the Canaries, he made all the sail he could to give us notice of it. He told us he was confident, they had not got the Islands, the winds hanging between the N.E. and E.N.E. and they steered away E.S.E.

The General call the Viceadmiral and me on board. At that time our advice was that he would put five or six weeks victuals into six or eight sail of his best frigates and send them to meet them; but he would not hear of dividing the fleet, but called a council and imparted the intelligence to the commanders and required their advice, wick also was to send a party to go to the Canaries to meet them; but the General inquiring what provisions

was in the fleet, found not one month's victuals at 6 to 4 men's allowances.

This obstructed our going with the fleet of part thereof to to look for them; but the Spaniards did all they could at Cales to fit out a fleet against us from thence. We ordered the fleet we had lie off Cape of Saint Marys and so to Cape Spratt, the General in the midst, my squadron to the south-wards of him and the Viceadmiral towards north-wards, spreading ourselves as far as we could, north and south.

About the 24th February we had news out of Galicia that their was arrived an adviso from the Spanish fleet, that they were bound for Teneriffe in the Canaries, and that they have fortified Santa Cruz and all the bay very strong, The General telling the Viceadmiral and I of it, we adviced him to send 6 or 8 sails to look for them; but he was very angry with us and said he would not part the fleet; charging us to speak no more of it. So we were silent and said no more, only kept our station until 26th March.

Then came the Yarmouth with 19 ships laden with victuals; we took part out and kept our station with the fleet. We had no more intelligence of the Spanish fleet homewards bound until the 28th, following we heard from Taura and Faro, that the Spaniards were at the Canaries and had landed the King's plate and all the best of their goods at Santa Cruz. The provisions in the foresaid victuallers being near six months' victuals for the whole fleet, we went to Taura in Portugal to take it in a port lying NNW from Cales about 16 leagues. There we had news from Saint Lucar and Cales every day and the certainty of the Spaniards being at the Canaries, and that they had fortified themselves so strongly they feared nothing.

The 8th of April we had gotten all our victuals and watered the fleet; we made way to sail. The General called a council to have advice what to do. All the commanders were for going directly for the Canaries. But the General would go to Cales first. We sailed for Cales that very night. Off the bar of Saint Lucar road a Plymouth ship whose merchants had being that night on shore. He sent a letter to the General by Captain Mootham and told the General it was for certain that the West Indies fleet

were at the Canaries, and fortified themselves strong and had landed their plate. It was calmed all day. The 10th I had a letter from Cales from a friend there by a Hollander that came out; which I showed the General, it giving an account of the arrival of the ship at the Canaries and how they had fortified themselves that they thought themselves as secure as if they had been at Cales. The General sent for the Viceadmiral; we advice together, and would have had him gone away presently, but the wind was westerly and we not above three leagues from Cales. The general would not agree to it; we lay off and on that night with the fleet. The 11th in the morning the General made sighne for the Viceadmiral and I again. We still advised him to go, for we had put the notion to a vast charge and had done nothing that year; and that because we had received such certain intelligence of their being there, and that we were so well fitted, we could have no excuse for not going. The General said little. We stayed on board all day.

In the afternoon there came Captain Saddleton in a little private man of war wich met them and fought with one of them. He saw them in Santa Cruz road and came on purpose to tell us of it. Upon which we spoke to the General again, that we might go, and then he gave his consent to steer away WSW that night; and we desire him that would dispatch all his business that night, for he send a vessel to Logust with letters for Lisbon and to give notice to any that should come to look for us there, that we were gone to the Canaries. That evening the wind came to the NNE; we went away our course.

The 12th in the morning the General called a council of war to have all the commanders' advice. They were all for going to the Canaries to find the Spanish fleet. Then came up the wind to the north east, a fresh gale; we had 23 men of war, 3 victuallers and 2 ketches in company.

The 18th day the General came by the lee about one o'clock, and called a council of war. We all went on board; it was very thick weather, we examined all or reckonings which agreed well together, that point Negro was between 9 and 10 leagues SWbS from us; before we went from on board we saw it plain. The

general ask our judgements, what we were best to do in our business; we all agreed we should go into Santa Cruz road with all speed we could; to that end ordered the fleet to lay their heads to the southwards until ten o'clock that night, and then to stand in and to point Negro to be in with the shore by day, and that every man did make his ship ready to that purpose, that night.

We would have had the General ordered how it should be done, whether with the whole fleet or a part, or whether if he would go in first or appoint any man. I propounded 12 sails of the best frigates to going and the rest stay out, but we could not persuade the General to anything that night. It being very fine weather the General stood to the southwards all night. The 19th in the morning we were run out of side of Teneriffe, and were got close to the Grand Canary; so the General made a signe for the Viceadmiral and I. We sent on board and did wonder what they meant, but seeing it was so, our advise was that we go close to the Island of Teneriffe that night and have all things ready to go about our work by daylight. We stayed on board the General all that day, but he would not do anything because it was the Sabbath day. We could by no means get him to order the fleet, but consented we should glide by the shore all night and that I should send in two frigates of my squadron to discover the enemy. I did send the Plymouth and Nantwich, the fleet lay about 3 or 4 leagues off. The 20th in the morning the two scouts made their signal that the enemy were there; but we being off shore could not see the ship under the high land: but they saw our fleet so soon as it was day. So about six of the clock the General called a council, to know what we should do. The Commanders, having displeased him so much the Saturday before, said never a word, until he earnestly desired them. Then I told him I had delivered my judgement the 18th day and could say no more until I knew better. He asked whether was all the Commanders' judgements? They replied yes. He then would know what ships those twelve should be. We desired him to name them, so he began and named 4 out of his own squadron first, 4 out of the Viceadmiral's and but 3 out of mine. The Commanders spoke to the General that I might

command them. The General asked me if I would. I told him with all my heart. Then he said that was done, and that he with the rest of the fleet would come and batter the castles, whilst we destroyed the ships. To that end he bid me do what I would in it. Knowing it not a time to neglect the business, I only gave them this verbal order, to follow me in a line as the General had first named them, which was as per margin (Speaker, Lyme, Lamport, Newbury, Bridgwater, Plymouth, Worcester, Newcastle, Foresight, Centurion, Winesby, Maidstone) and wheresoever I saw the greatest danger I would go, and that they fired not a gun until they were at an anchor, and that they should anchor three or four cables' length from the shore for the Veering in their ships after the enemy if occasion were, and the heaving their ships off after they had done their business. They told me they would; so we went about our business and when we came into the bay I found it as in the draft, and the ships riding in that order as near as I can remember, and we came to an anchor as the draft doth show, with the lands lying and the form of their works I am sure very near like the figure.

The two ships that were upon the scout, not knowing what order I have given, they came to anchor by the first ship we came to. I stood upon the forecastle of our ship to seek a good berth for the better doing our work. I perceived I might get in between the admiral and the viceadmiral to our great advantage, which I did. As the figure will show we anchored about eight of the clock and fired but two guns, that was against my will; the Spaniards firing so thick from the ships and shore put us into some disorder for want of good care in the commanders to prevent it. We went as near as we could with safety and were within pistol shot of the admiral and the viceadmiral, a little more of the rear; they were all great ships that rode near the castle, 1000 and 1200 tons apiece and of them 7 or 8, five more six of 800 tons: four more (made) the rest (whereof) only one 300 tons or thereabouts, the whole number was 17 sail. All these ships were blown up or burnt except five of them taken; and the admiral and viceadmiral whom I could have sent going first but they were my barricades, one for the fort and the admiral for the great castle, between 11 or 12 a forenoon; at

which time the General with the remain of the fleet came in and rid to seaboard of us.

When I had got out warps to warp our ship off, we fired in two or 3 broadside into the viceadmirals, he came on fire and immediately blew up. Then we hove a little further and fired 3 or 4 broadside into the admiral, and he either by our shot or some accident blew up all at once; no sighne to be seen of her but the carved work of the stern in the water; this being between 12 and 1 o'clock.

We hove away as fast as we could apeck upon our anchor. In the interim as we were warping off, the General sent to the commanders to burnt the ships they had brought off and had them at their sterns out of dangers, the General sent to them 3 times before they would burn them; at best they did. The Swiftsure had one on the Bridgwater brought off, the Bridgwater one, the Plymouth one, the Worcester one and the Maidstone one; all full of goods. We continued warping, and got our ships off about half a mile in a very short time, so that the castle did not strike us upon the visall line. After that we kept stop our leaks as fast as they could make them, but our ships was much torn. We had holes between wind and water 4 or 5 foot long and 3 or 4 foot broad, that we had so shift to keep her from sinking but by nailing hides over the holes and nail butt staves along the sides of the hides, for we had 8 or 9 foot water in the ship that our pumps and boiling would hardly keep her free. I sent to the General to appoint some ship to tow us off; I appointed the viceadmiral but the wind came to the ebs, and it was impossible for us to get off, our masts being like to fall as we rode at anchor in smooth water; our main yard shot off at the quarter, our main top-mast by the board, the fore yard shot by the slings or near the middle. We had not one whole rope over head, nor sail but sprit-sail and sprit-sail top-sail.

Between three and four of the clock the General weighed and the rest of the fleet and left us.

(When) the viceadmiral saw that, he weighed likewise, we having a stream cable on board him to tow by; they being in such a hurry, the shot flying thick, they cut loose; so we rid by ourselves.

The Spaniards seeing we were left alone came down to their forts again, for we had beaten them out of every fort, only the great castle. Then they paid us extremely. So we rid until the sun went down, when the wind came off shore and we set those pieces of sails we had and cut away our anchor.

Our ship got away from the mark Red A and we were forced to keep our guns going still and the enemy plying hard at us.

Just as we past by the great castle, either by our shot or some accident among themselves, there was a great quantity of powder blown up. After that, they never fired one gun more at us.

Our ship having way, shot without the point to B; our foremast fell by the board and we had no sooner cleared ourselves of it by cutting it away, but down falls our main-mast. We cut away that presently; then down falls, our mizen mast, we had only our bowsprit to friend. The Plymouth standing in to us, saw our disaster; she clapt an end of a cable on us and towed us off shore, and we making a sighne the whole fleet sent boats and 6 or 700 carpenters and seamen, to pump and bail out the water.

Until that time I durst not let no boat come on board, no not so much as our own boats for my men would have left the ship; for the commanders of other ships said we should never save her; yet through mercy we did, but she was almost full of water. We spoiled all our dry provisions that we had and all things else in hold.

The next day we freed our ship of the water, and got up jury masts and mended our leaks as well as we could; but the wind came to the SW and SSW, a hard gale, the 22nd; away we were forced to go with the fleet, the Plymouth still towed us, having nothing between wind and water but the hides afore-mentioned until we came into Logust Bay which was the 4th May; encountering sometimes fair weather sometimes foul. There we took off our hides between wind and water, and made it firm with plank, that the ship then was very tight. The 6th May the General ordered me and the Fairfax home to London. Through mercy I got well there the 20th June following.

This being the truth of all the considerable passages we had after the first heard of the Spanish West-India fleet, that we

destroyed at Santa Cruz in the Canaries as I shall be deposed on my oath if required.

In this service we had but five men killed outright; ten more died of their wounds, and thirty or forty more wounded. All the fleet besides lost not above 8 men and 20 wounded.

2-3) ANÓNIMOS I Y II²⁷.—Se trata de dos informes, probablemente escritos por oficiales de la escuadra inglesa. El cotejo de los dos textos nos hace proponerlos gemelos, más que un caso evidente de plagio.

La disposición del asunto, los tópicos (el viento favorable, la buena voluntad de Jehová, el número de víctimas) autorizan a estimarlos como redactados por dos testigos presenciales con experiencias en común.

Si bien la cronología de la navegación desde que zarpan en Cádiz, así como el número de barcos españoles, difieren ligeramente (16 y 17 en uno y otro), estos dos anónimos pueden considerarse equivalentes.

Ninguna otra fuente habla que en vísperas de la batalla se enviase una fragata a Gran Canaria para reconocer sus puertos ni que la aproximación a Tenerife se hiciera desde la isla vecina.²⁸ Lo que sí es cierto es que una nave expedida desde Gran Canaria reconoció la escuadra inglesa y se anticipó a informarlo.

²⁷ Cfr. «Mercurius Politicus», 8 Mayo-4 Junio 1657.

²⁸ Stayner lo que cuenta es lo siguiente: a merced del buen tiempo, y puesto que Blake se había propuesto guardar el descanso sabático, la flota merodeó a lo largo de la costa sureste de Tenerife, divisando sin duda el noroeste de la Gran Canaria.

A SHORT NARRATIVE OF ENGAGEMENT
BEFORE SANTA CRUZ

20 — April, 1657

A short narration describing the manner of the engagement betwixt the English and Spanish fleets before Sancta Crux at the Canary Islands called Teneriffe on the 20 of April 1657.

Having received certain intelligence that the Spanish West India fleet did not remain at Teneriffe; and intended to fit most of his fleet, from thence, for the West Indies again; a council of War was called, and twas determined that the fleet should sail for that Island, we knowing that the Spanish ships at Cadiz to be in no forwardness to put to sea, therefore on Sabbath day night being April the 12Th we (having a fir wind) bore away from the Canary Islands, and on Saturday the 18Th we made the land. When we made the land a Council of War was called the Commanders; and on Sunday sent in a frigate to discover whether any ships were at the island Grand Canary. On Sunday a Council of War of flag officers was called, and finding no ships there we sailed for Teneriffe, and by break of day Monday the 20Th we were fair in with the land, and discovering their ships, a short Council of War was called, where it was determined that 12 sail of the biggest frigates of the Rear Admiral commanding them should make the assault, it being left to the Commander's discretion whether they would bring their ships to an anchor or not. The whole fleet came to an anchor, and in this particular thing Captain Eustace Smith did much futher the victory, who so soon as he came on board from the Council of War (having told his officers what was determined) made sail and stood into the Spanish fleet, and brought his ship to anchor in the thickest of them, and first began the dispute. The Spaniards were 16 great ships, 13 from the West Indies, the other three were outward bound; they had brought their ship within command of musket shot of their works which were very strong; the whole bay rounded with three breastworks one within the other, that next to the water side had stone forts for great guns, very near adjacent one to the other,

and at one part a strong castle, all wick made the Spaniard think himself impregnable, and he scorned all that thought otherwise; yet it pleased God to give us a complete victory over them, for that of the 16 not one remained. After we destroyed the shipping we plied our guns upon the forts, and beat them from some of them; the Spaniard at the first onset plied their business closely but liked not the continuance of it: for whether it was that we should not take their ships, or whether it were an accident, the Admiral and Vice-Admiral soon blew up, and saved themselves by boat or swimming; the rest, some fell into our hands, some perished by fire, and some by water; seven or eight of their ships we had possession of, but they were either diabled by shots, or by them set on fire; so that we could not get any of them off: By that time it was three o'clock, everything of theirs was destroyed; and by the closing of the daylight, our whole fleet was in saftey under sail. To the great Jehovah, be ascribed all praise, and thankful acknowledgements for so great a mercy vouchsafed to the English nation.

What number of men the Spaniard lost is uncertain, but to the best of my observation I judge one thousand to be the least: an on our part I am confidents, 60 is the most, besides the wounded.

FROM ABOARD THE «JERSEY» FRIGATE

May 6-16, 1657

(From aboard the *Jersey* frigate at anchor in the Bay of Lagos, May 6, 1657)

On Tuesday the 7 of April the fleet having watered and taken in all their provisions which were sent them from England, in Trevilla near Faro in Portugal, where no man living remembereth so much goods taken out and in, in so short a time, without the least damage either to the provisions, or ships, which were board

and board, with a most remarkable Providence. Wendesday the 8Th we weighed and set sail for Cadiz, had very favourable weather and gale; and Sunday the 12Th being under sail off Cadiz, came two small vessels to the General, one from Leghorn, and the other from the Canary Islands, being on a private account, and commanded by one Saddleton.

The General having intelligence of the Spanish West India fleet riding in Sancta Cruz-Bay, which town hath its being on the island known by the name of Teneriffe. Monday the day following the General and the fleet steered thitherwards, and had a most prosperous gale hither all the way attend us, so that we were in a fit place and posture to assault them the Monday the 20 of April following, and accordingly did, 12 ships were ordered in at first, and were seconded by our whole fleet. The work began between 8 and 9 in the morning and continued while daylight permitted, in which space of time, were all their ships burnt or sunk, not one escaped from those two merciless element Fire and Water; for it was not long ere their ships were either too hot, or cold for them, or they many of them for their ships. If I mistake not the number of ships burnt were 14, sunk two besides a small vessel of about 40 tons sunk, in all (reckoning that small one) 17 sail, their treasure was conveyed ashore, and the major part of it reported to be at a town about 5 or 6 miles up in the country, called Arragona: I am informed that one of the prisoners reported their General (whom they held to be very discreet, active, and valiant) was slain before the ship blew up, being in her, and many other persons of esteem, and quality, then questionless a large quantity of ordered and private men; we have not lost so much as a boat that I hear of; not full 60 men in the whole fleet, a miraculous mercy, and that would be thought on while we have any being: the ship most damnified was the *Speaker* (who commended the first party) for which she is sent home I suppose: we hear the Spaniard hath unmanned all his ships at Cadiz, to make up his late breach which was made by the Portugal in his army. Five or six regiments of foot to have landed in the town while their guns were speechless (being many of them dismounted, and their men discouraged) would have bid fair for their treasure if not the island. Some prisoners report, as also

some English which were left at Hispaniola but not rescued and redeemed, that when they had intelligence of our approaching from the Grand Canary (where they first discovered us) that they derided us among themselves, and laughed our intentions to scorn, drank healths to our confusion and were (for Spaniards) very jolly; but their healths of confusion, and their presumtuos standing on their own strength availed them very little, for the confusion fell on themselves. We had very fair weather 3 or 4 days after this, while we had fitted the *Speaker* with jury masts, and stopped her many leaks; and then a fair gale to carry us back to our station again, the like of which no one that hath used the Canary trade ever knew, there being a trade wind. These are divine mercies and favours to us (that are unworthy of the least of all His mercies) no less than miracles and wonders.

4) NARRATIVE OF ACTION AT SANTA CRUZ.—Esta fuente constituyó la nota que dio a conocer el Parlamento el 28 de mayo de 1657.²⁹

Quizá el dato más original sea la lista de nombres de la oficialidad española, agrupada según el puerto de procedencia en las tierras de América (Vera Cruz, Honduras, Santo Domingo), que suma trece en total, más tres mercantes surtos en la bahía, lo que eleva la cifra a dieciséis.³⁰

Incluso este documento no permite conjeturar que alguna fragata holandesa estuviese fondeada o costeano la Isla.³¹ El

²⁹ Cfr. B. M. *Thomason Tracts*, E. 1065, 14.

³⁰ Durante todo el verano la flota inglesa estuvo alerta para interceptar los enlaces marítimos de Holanda y Canarias (Cfr. Cal. St. P. [Venice], 22 de junio y 10 de agosto, 1657).

³¹ Cfr. G. DÍAZ PLAJA, *La Historia de España en sus documentos* (El siglo XVII), Madrid, 1957, pp. 335-340.

almirante holandés De Ruyter emprendía una travesía, vía el Mediterráneo y destinada a contender con naves francesas.

Justo en aquella misma primavera Cromwell y Mazarino firmaban un tratado secreto de liga ofensiva y defensiva contra España y Holanda. La política centroeuropea de los Borbones iba disparada a la liquidación del predominio austriaco, mientras que en ultramar la flota inglesa acosaba, en las dos orillas del Atlántico, los puertos de jurisdicción española.³²

NARRATIVE OF ACTION AT SANTA CRUZ

Thomason Tracts, B. M., E. 1065, 14

After taking the supply of Victuals that was brought us the latter end of March, we spent two or three days before the town of Cadiz, and finding the Enemy there in no great forwardness to come forth with a Fleet as was expected; The General on the Thirteenth of April, One thousand six hundred fifty seven, called the Commanders together, and communicated his thoughts to go for Santa Cruz, on the Island of Teneriffe, laying before them the reasons that induced him to it, which they all approved of, and a favourable Gale just at the time presented to carry us thither. On the Eighteenth following in the evening we discovered Land, supposed to be Point Negro, but being thick and hazy, could not certainly make it until Noon the next day, whereby the Enemy had no longer notice of our being on the Coast that we designed he should, before we came to Action.

On Monday the twentieth of April one thousand six hundred fifty-seven, we were by break of day fiar in the offing of Santa Cruz, and as soon as 'twas light, perceived by a Signal from one of our Frigates ahead, that the West-India Fleet were in the bay.

³² Nos fue posible localizar ejemplar de esta obra en la Rare Books Collection, Library of Congress, Ed. de 1725 (Londres).

Whereupon, after a short Conference how to order the Attempt, and earnest seeking to the Lord for his Presence, we fell in amongst them, and by eight of the clock we were all at anchor, some under the Castle and Forts, and others by the Ships sides, as we could berth ourselves to keep clear of one another, and best annoy the Enemy.

There had been there five or six Galleons (whereof were Admiral, Vice-Admiral and Rear-Admiral, with their Standard and Flags aloft) and other considerable Ships making up the number of sixteen, some having Goods brought from the Indies still on board them, others having taken in Goods and Provisions to carry back again: Most of them were furnished with Brass Ordinance, and (as we have been informed since) had their full companies of Seamen and Soldiers kept continually on board them, from the first coming thither, which was about the beginning of February last, their General himself in all the time lying but one night out of his Ship: they were moored close along the Shore, which lies in the manner of a Semi-circle, commanded as far as the Ships rid, by the Castle, and surrounded beside with six or seven Forts, with almost a continued Line for Musqueteers and great Shot, as the Ground between admitted; And we were forced to come near to do our work, that many of them Men we have slain and wounded, were shot by the Murquetears from the Shore; Notwithstanding it pleased God that in four hours time their Men were beaten out, and all the Ships put ashore, except the Admiral, and Vice-Admiral, who made the most considerable resistance. About two of the clock the Vice-Admiral was set on fire, and the Admiral, by some happy shot, or some accident, suddenly blown up; having (as we perceived just before) many Men on board her; by the evening all the rest were fired. only two that sunk down to rights, and had little but their Masts appearing above water.

It remained to complete this Mercy, that our own Ships should come off well, wherein the greatest hazard and difficulty lay; for some riding near into the Shore, and being sorely maimed did require to be warped off, others when they came to weigh, drove with the wind all the while blowing right into the Bay, and one of our best Frigates struck: The Enemy in the meantime supplied

fresh Men into his Forts for those we had killed and beaten out in the heat of the Action, and from them and the Castle continued plying upon us, till about seven of the clock at night, every Ship and Vessel belonging to our Fleet, were by the good hand of god got safe out of command.

In this service we had not fifty slain outright, and one hundred and twenty wounded, and the damage to our Ships was such as in two days time we indifferently well repaired for present security: Which we had no sooner done, but the Wind veered to the South West (which is rare among those Islands) and lasted just to bring us to our former Station near Cape Maries, where we arrived the second of May following: For which merciful appearance all along with us, we desire the Lord may have the praise and glory, to whom only it is due; and that all that hear of it may turn and say (as of a truth we have found) that among the gods there is none like unto Him, neither are there any works like unto His works.

The Names of the Commanders of the New Spain Fleet, and of the other Ships that were burnt in the Santa Cruz Road on the 20Th of April, 1657.

Don Diego Diagues, General.

Don Josepho Sentenno, Vice-Admiral.

Roque Gallindo, Rear-Admiral.

Gasper Goteras, in the great *Campeachan*.

Martin de Lazondo, in the little *Campeachan*.

These commanders with their ships came from La vela Cruce in New Spain.

John Quintero.

Francisco de Estoeta.

Pedro Fegoroa.

Don Francisco Velasques.

Pedro Oreguel.

Commanders of the Admiral and Vice-Admiral of Hundoras.

Francisco Martines.

Francisco de Arana.

Pedro Sorrillio Commander of the ship wich came from
Santo Domingo.

These Commanders with their ships were in Santa Cruz before
their Fleet arrived from the Indis.

Gregory Gomes.
Francisco Marcadel.
Fernando Sohes.

Thursday May 28, 1657.

Ordered by the Parliament, that this Narrative be Printed and
Published with the Order of the Hoise for the Day of Thanksgiving.

HENRY SCORBEL,
Clerk of the Parliament.

5) THE FIGHTING SAILOR TURNED PEACEABLE CHRISTIAN.—
Thomas Lurting era contramaestre en la fragata «Bristol», una de las que integraban la flota de Blake cuando a la altura de la bahía de Cádiz se les informó que las naves españolas habían derivado rumbo a Canarias.

El testimonio de Lurting interesa por dos motivos: primero, es rico en cuanto a la operación de anclaje, cañoneo del Almiranta, abordaje y hundimiento de otras naves enemigas, así como confirma la ineficacia del fuego de cañones desde la costa, ya que era difícil acertar, y más en tal confusa eventualidad. Blake no se había equivocado a este respecto.⁸³

Pero también atrae como reflejo del espíritu cuáquero, en aquellos días una de las sectas más perseguidas, o al menos, poco estimadas en Holanda e Inglaterra, debido al pacifismo radical de sus miembros.

⁸³ Cfr. el mapa de la bahía, dando idea de la disposición de la flota española tal como estaba anclada al iniciar el *Speaker* la maniobra de aproximación, y cómo a pesar del frente artillero instalado a lo largo de la costa, muy poco daño se pudo hacer al invasor.

Lurting atribuyó lo que él llama *deliverances* en la batalla de Santa Cruz al providencialismo, en esta ocasión pretexto para la conversión a la nueva secta, que tanto porvenir haría en el Nuevo Mundo.³¹

No es probable que uno de los barcos españoles, hundido después de arder, por intrépida acción del mismo Lurting, estuviese aún cargado con parte del tesoro, aunque sí es cierto (casi todas las demás fuentes lo corroboran) que a bordo permanecieron otras mercancías, perdidas irremisiblemente.

THE FIGHTING SAILOR TURN'D PEACEABLE CHRISTIAN

Thomas Lurting

Now of the many deliverances, I shall only hint at three or four that happen'd in that Day, which wrought some Remorse on me. The aforesaid four Deliverances, was at a Place call'd *Sancta Cruze*, in the Island of the Canaries; where I had not only those four, but many Deliverances.

News being brought to our general *Blake*, as we lay in *Cales-Bay*, that sixteen Sail of Galeons arriv'd at *Sancta Cruze* from the *West Indies*, we instantly went out and in a few Days got thither, and found as it was reported; and several ships went in before us, to make *Discovery* how they lay, and anchoring at some Distance, about half Gun-shot from the Castle, which was large, and had about 40 Guns at least, and there was several forts and Breast-Works, of about 8 or 10 guns each. The Wind blew very right on the shore, and we coming in, in a later Squadron, went under our General's Stern to know where we should be? and were answer'd, *Where we could get room*. So we ran in, but could get no room to bring up our Ship; for we went a-stern all our Ships, and the

³¹ Cfr. M. E. HIRST, *The Quakers in Peace and War*, New York, 1923, 560 pp.

Smoke being somewhat abated, we found ourselves to be within half a Cable's Length of the Vice-Admiral's Galeon, of about 50 Guns, and 300 Men; and not above a Cable's Length from the Admiral, a Galeon of about 50 or 60 Guns, and having also about 400 Men, and within Half-Gunshot of a large Castle, of 40 Guns; and within Musquet-shot of some forts and Breast-Works.

And when we had brought up our Ship, we were about half a Cable's length from Vice-Admiral, just in his Weak, or in the Head of him; then our Captain call'd to me, to make all ready, or get to veer nearer the Galeon: *For I will*, said he, *be on board the Vice-Admiral*. So we veer'd to be on Board of him, and so fast as we veer'd towards him, he veer'd from us, until he came about Musquet-shot of the Shore. Then the Captain call'd to me, to get a Hauser out of the Gun-Room-Port, and clap a Spring on the Cable; when done, be veer'd our Cable, and lay just cross his Hawse, about half a musquet-shot from him; then we run all the guns we could on that Side towards him, which were in Number 28 or 30, and all Hands went to it in earnest.

And the second Broadside some of our Shot, as we judged, fell into his Powder-Room, and she blew up, and not one Man escaped, that we could perceive.

Then the *Spanish* Admiral, was going to serve us, as we had served his Vice-Admiral; which we perceiving, ply'd him very close, with about 28 or 30 Guns; and the third Broadside, all his Men leap'd over-board, and instantly she blew up.

And there was a small Castle of 40 Guns, we were so far into the Bay, that they could not bring upon us above two or three Guns.

But when we went off, they ply'd us close with their great Guns, but did us no great Damage.

After this Expedition was over, and that we had blown up the two *Spanish* Admirals, I took the Long-Boat, to go on Board a Galeon, that lay on the shore near to another Castle, suposing that the Men where not on Board; but there were some, and they lay close on Board, until we came withing two or three Ships length of them, and then they rose up and fir'd several Guns at us; but being so near their Ship, all their Shot went over us: Which

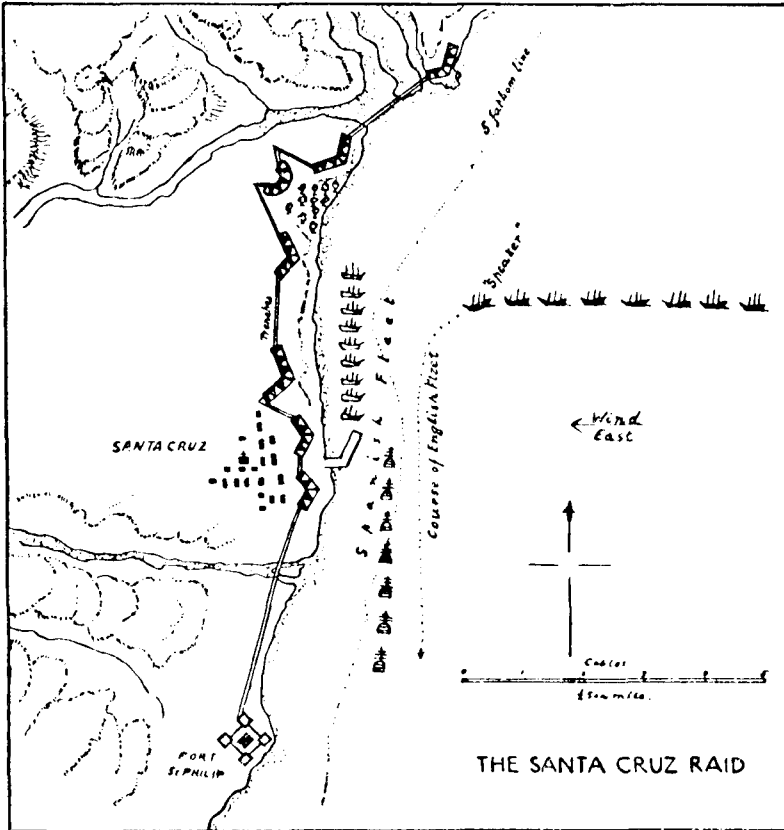
I call the first great Deliverance. Then on our Return towards our Ship, they from several Castles and Breast-works, fir'd briskly at us with great and small Shot, which came very eear us; notwithstanding we all got safe on board our own Ship: And this I call the second great Deliverance.

In a little Time, the Smoke of their Guns being gone, I saw three Galeons on Shore, all on Board one another; one of them along the Shore, and one cross her Hawse, and the other cross her Stern, about a Musquet-shot from our Ship; and there was a Castle on one Side of them, and a Breast-work on the other, with about 50 or 60 men in it, as was supposed, and the Galeons lay about half a Cable's length from the Castle, and the same Distance from the Breast-work, and about fifty yards from the Shore: Then I took the Pinnace, and two Men with me, and was going to set them one Fire; but the Captain saw me, and call'd me back, and sent five Men more with me; and on our setting forward, our Ship fir'd a Gun, and in the Smoke thereof we got on board the Galeon, and received no Harm, (the *Spaniards* having left them) and I instantly set one of them on Fire, which burnt tre other two Galeons.

And when we could stay no longer, by reason of the Fire, and our Ship's Crew not being as formerly mindful of us, to fire some Guns, that in the Smoke thereof we might have retir'd back, without being discovered by any from the Breast-works; but they seeing of us, we were forc'd, by reason on the Fire, to return presently towards our own Ship. The Breast-work then having full Sight of us, discharg'd a Volley of about 50 or 60 small Shot, and kill'd two of our Men, and shot a third in the back; and I sat close to one that was kill'd, between him and the Shore, and close to him that was shot in the back, and receiv'd no Harm: And this was a third and eminent Deliverance.

And coming out of the Bay, we came within three or four Ship's Length of the Castle that had 40 Guns; and they kept them in Readiness, until we came directly over against the Castle, then they fir'd, but we were so near, that most of the Shot went over, and did us little Harm, only in our Rigging: And I was on the Main-tack, getting the Main-tack on board, and the Shot cut

the Bolt-Rope a little above my head: And this was the fourth Deliverance, and all in six hours Time, and never to be forgotten by me; but I declare to be thankful to God, who from these and many other Dangers, has apparently delivered me.

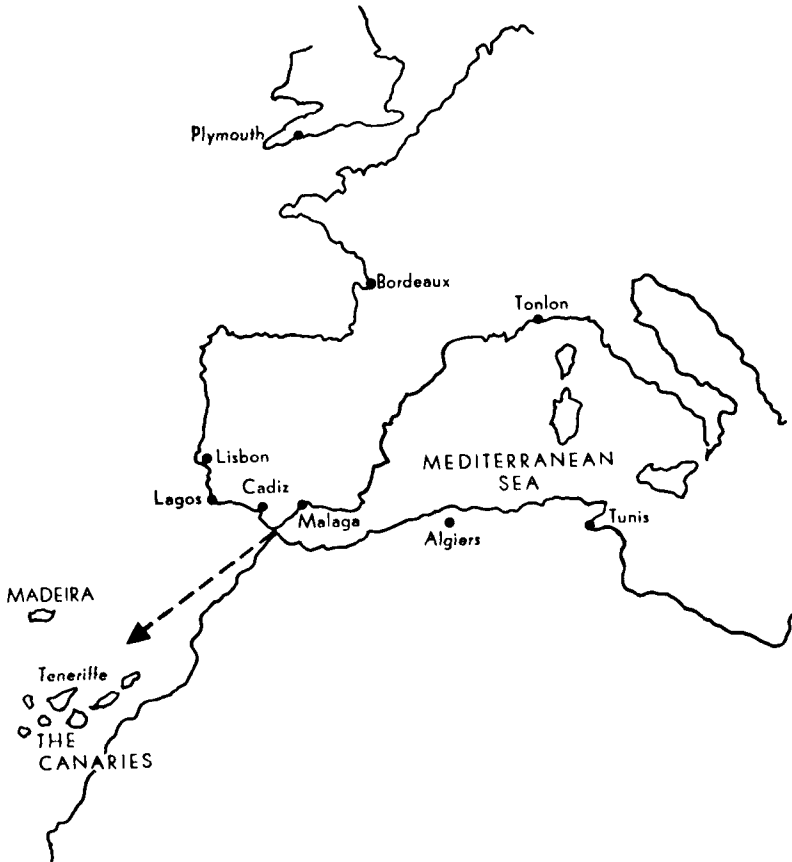


Reconstrucción de la batalla de Santa Cruz de Tenerife

Según C. E. Lucas en *Cromwell's Capitains*

And the aforesaid 16 Galeons, were very large ships, from 300 Tons to 1000, and upwards; and the first that I burnt, as our Men judged, had a great deal of Silver on board, being a Ship

of about 800 Ton, and the other two richly laden, and about 7 or 800 Ton, and all perished together; and all the rest of the sixteen being richly laden, not having Time to get their Lading out, we



Bloqueo inglés de los puertos españoles del Atlántico
y del Mediterráneo en 1650

were so suddenly upon them, were all burnt or destroyed, together with their Lading. But then I neither was a *Quaker*, nor were

any of the People so called on board our Ship; nor ever to my Remembrance, had heard of any called by that Name.

* * *

Algunas consideraciones

La batalla de Santa Cruz, más que batalla, asedio y destrucción de la flota española de Indias en la bahía de Tenerife, culminaba la política colonial del Protectorado, iniciada ya por Isabel I; práctica del corso y contraofensiva inglesa a la estrategia marítima española en América y en el Atlántico europeo.

Es cierto que si no se obtuvo el rescate del *stock* metálico, depositado prudentemente en el interior de Tenerife por el almirante español, la Inglaterra de Cromwell conseguía, al margen de la contienda centroeuropea, fundamentar unas garantías para el establecimiento del llamado *old colonial system*.

España, que venía haciendo concesiones desde 1648, sufría casi simultáneamente derrotas por mar y tierra. La Paz de los Pirineos (1659) pretendía ser una tregua honrosa, pero se parecía ya al «acabamiento nacional», a causa de lo que un hombre de la época calificó de «el cáncer de la guerra», diagnóstico equivoco de los reinados de la Casa de Austria; la batalla de Santa Cruz no constituyó exclusiva causa determinante de las jaquecas padecidas por la hacienda española entre 1650-1660, pero sí fue un inesperado revés, en que la fortuna y la impresión se coaligaron para facilitar la maniobra de Blake.

En cuanto a Canarias, asediada desde los albores de su conquista y colonización por la piratería noreuropea y africana, no es posible afirmar que el desagradable episodio de abril de 1657 significara ni irreparables daños materiales ni desmoralización en

la voluntad de sobrevivir, gesto que sobre todo en siglos como el XVII y el XVIII tanto tipifican la historia insular.

Es más: la economía del Archipiélago, siempre dependiente de una fluida comercialización de sus frutos, había encontrado desde 1570-1580 un rentable intermediario (factores angloholandeses, flamencos, algunos judíos de Barcelona, Lisboa, Amsterdam y Londres). A pesar de las hostilidades de la época, las Islas siguieron atrayendo a un heterogéneo grupo de mercaderes: antes y después de la batalla de Santa Cruz los vínculos con los puertos ingleses fueron intensos.

Lo que no resulta fácil decidir es el alcance de la intención inglesa en cuanto a la conquista de una de las Islas a la altura de 1657. Que varios documentos (correspondencia particular más que actas de cancillerías) lo consignan, y que en los medios de Whitehall circuló como posible y tentadora jugarreta contra España, ya lo hemos visto durante el transcurso de este ensayo.

Las implicaciones de Canarias en la política mercantil y en la estrategia atlántica de Inglaterra han sido ya tema de estudio en anteriores ocasiones: baste constatar que por ahora tenemos entre manos algún material inédito con que conseguirlo.